

PEOPLE of West Are Ignorant of the Bible; Do Not Read Enough

Because of This Fact Sunday Schools Are Largely Failure; Need for Better Church Work Apparent.

By Rev. MILES HANSON, Pastor of First Congregational Church.

1 Timothy, 3d chap., verse 16: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable."

THESE words evidently imply that some scriptures are not inspired and that the various parts of the Hebrew Bible are not of equal value. The old version reads: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable." The two versions give two quite different meanings and the saying is a good illustration of the value of biblical study. The old rendering was not a true translation; the new gives quite a fresh meaning. As with these words so is it with many sayings, and I want the added light from the new version to be an incentive for new study of the Bible.

Need for Study. That there is a great need for this study all observers will agree. Ignorance of the Bible is one of the striking features of western life. Our children are woefully ignorant and our young men and women openly confess their lack of knowledge. The one book that is not read is the Bible. We will fight about it, we will persecute in its name, but read it in the light of present knowledge we will not.

I remember often seeing in the cottages of England a so-called better room or parlor. Under the window was a little round table and on this a big family Bible, over it an antimacassar, and on that a vase with some everlasting flowers. Therein the leather cover of the Bible was faded, but the leaves within were fresh and white and clean, for they were never opened. We go a stage further—we do not even possess a family Bible.

Greatest of Books. Yet the Bible is a collection of the greatest literature; it is the greatest literary book in the world; it is the source of the grandest oratory; as history it is unrivaled, and as an aid to devotion it is unique. If it pass out of our life, its departure will mean a national calamity.

Still, I fear that passing out it is, and every thinking patriot must wonder what steps can be taken to again make the book of books an integral part of our national being.

There are four spheres wherein especially Bible knowledge should be gained, viz.: Home, day school, Sunday school and church, and to each of these I wish to call your attention.

The home as a place of biblical instruction. All readers are fond of Burns' picture in the "Century" Saturday Night. The week is over, the children are all gathered around the fireside, the old father fetches the book (note the use of the participle), a hymn is sung and then in earnest tones a chapter is read.

That picture has few replicas today, for from one reason and another Bible reading and family worship have died out with the death of one of the greatest sources of strength of character has also died away.

Bible in Home. The home is the place of excellence where a knowledge of the Bible should be gained and certainly one of the dearest memories of my life is the looking at the pictures in great Bible and hearing explanations from the lips of father or mother. I learned the lives of the Bible heroes in my youth and part and parcel of my youthful thinking.

How many El Paso children know the stories of old Hebrew heroes? I fear not many.

Home biblical instruction is so small that, unfortunately, it can almost be discarded in attendance to revive biblical knowledge.

Day School. If the day school is a place of biblical instruction.

As we all know, the Bible is out of our day schools.

The various religious sects have so squabbled about the book, have shown so much mutual love in their discussions thereof, that practical common sense has said, "A plague on you all, out the Bible goes, and there's an end of your fights."

At present there is no sign of the fighting ceasing, the prospect being for more remote than the establishment of harmony across the Rio Grande, hence no reformer can rely on the day school for assisting in the acquisition of sacred knowledge.

Thus there are only two places or help left, the Sunday school and the church.

The Sunday School. III. The Sunday school as a place of religious instruction.

In all I say of Sunday schools I carry a great love of the institution. I have been connected intimately with Sunday school work nearly 40 years, and my father had a continuous record of

30 years as superintendent—a record to equal, since all my incumbents have behind them an intense regard. Despite all this regard, if I ask myself if the Sunday school does impart biblical instruction, I am obliged to sorrowfully answer no. The Sunday school is a failure in that sense. Teachers tell me that they do not know enough of the Bible in a modern sense to be able to teach it and some of them fall back on lesson hints.

If there is one thing more than another that is calculated to make a teacher a failure it is the taking openly before the pupils lesson hints.

Classbooks or textbooks in either day or Sunday school are an abomination. Have the books, know them, but never take them into a class. A minister who took into the pulpit the various books that had helped him on his sermon and who proceeded during his sermon to read various extracts, would soon have an empty chapel and deservedly so. A teacher or any school who has to rely on text or classbook is not a real teacher.

Duty of Teachers. A teacher must be filled with his or her subject and then give it out life and life. But, say many, we do not know enough of the Bible to do this and therefore cannot enthusiastically speak of them. Hence it is that we reach the greatest need in our Sunday schools, and that is, by a real, thorough, up to date Bible class, or teachers' instruction class.

There is now a settled consensus of opinion amongst scholars on many points of Bible story. Men like Peake, Agnew, Neuman, Stude, Bennett, Briggs, Bacon, Gladstone and a host of other scholars are a guarantee as to enough biblical certainty to satisfy the normal student, and in El Paso we need a class taught by a principal who knows the present day positions and who will give his knowledge on loving faith. Surely such a man can be found.

Churches Stand by Him. If he be found, then, let the churches stand by him. If he talk of a composite Genesis of three or four Isaiahs and of sources of the gospels, do not then tell him he is a heretic and that he does not know what he believes.

WILL SING OLD FAMILIAR HYMNS AT THE SQUARE

Increased Interest Is Being Taken in the Open Air Religious Meetings.

OPEN air services will be held in Cleveland square Sunday evening at 7:30.

Rev. Charles L. Overstreet, pastor of the First Presbyterian church will preach. There will be the usual brief service, where the audience and church join in singing the familiar old hymns, led by Edwin White. In addition to the hymns, the White quartet will sing special selections.

The large crowds that assemble at these out of door services indicate the interest and approval of the people in them.

First Presbyterian Church. At the First Presbyterian church, Boulevard and Stanton, Rev. Charles L. Overstreet, pastor, the morning service, Sunday will be held at 10:30. Sermon by the pastor, Francis Moore is the organist and director of the music. Special numbers will be given by the stringed trio. Sabbath school meets at 5:30. L. L. Robinson, superintendent. Christian Endeavor meets at 6:30 p. m.

Westminster Presbyterians. At the Westminster Presbyterian church, Rev. John E. Abbott, the pastor will preach Sunday morning at 11 o'clock. The topic of the sermon will be "Sanctification." There will be a solo by Samuel Kirkpatrick, selected. Sunday school will be held at 10:30. Sermon by the pastor, Francis Moore at 4:30 p. m. and Senior Endeavor at 7 p. m. In the evening at 8 o'clock a special musical service will

Sentence Sermons By El Paso Ministers

THE BIBLE admonishes against setting our hope on the "uncertainty of riches." Evidently there is an uncertainty about riches. It is uncertain we shall accumulate riches, however much we may toil; whether we shall keep them, if accumulated, and whether they shall prove a blessing or a curse.—Rev. O. J. Wade of Cavalry-Houston-Square Baptist church.

Mr. Lincoln said: "You can fool all the people part of the time, part of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time." Be that as it may, you cannot fool God at all of the time. You must give an account at the final judgment for the deeds done in the body.—Rev. W. C. Baber of the Altura Presbyterian church.

Christ, our master, lived a life of self-forgetfulness. He pleased not himself. He chose the hard way—the difficult road. He lived and died for others. He is our example. We are to be as he was, to do as he did, and live as he lived.—Rev. Wallace R. Evans of Highland Park Methodist church.

The greatest evidence of Christianity is the Christian, as Coleridge said in answer to the demand for a proof of the Christian faith, "Try it." The Lord himself did not argue the matter, but said, "Come and see."—Rev. Chas. L. Overstreet of First Presbyterian church.

Protestant orthodoxy has made Paul the defender of traditions, but he was rather the propagandist of a new theology, the steadfast and unrelenting opponent of a narrow conservatism that well nigh stifled Christianity in the first century.—Rev. Perry J. Rice of First Christian church.

The rewards and punishments in the spiritual kingdom are definitely meted out for faithfulness and unfaithfulness; rewards are firm, just, beneficial; punishments are severe, just, righteous; both according to the law of spiritual truth.—"Unto him that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him."—Rev. H. P. Bond of East El Paso Methodist church.

If you have not done so, you ought to fly to Christ by faith and pray for the spirit of sanctification; lay your whole life unreservedly upon the altar of God and the altar will sanctify the gift.—Rev. John E. Abbott of the Westminster Presbyterian church.

Character feeds on thought; service gives it exercise. Neither alone can grow a healthy spirit. Both are essential to a strong, rich life.—Rev. A. E. Boyd of Highland Park Baptist church.

How often the deeply devout soul can penetrate into the Holy of Holies of God's truth, while the cultured man, lacking in devotion, must sit at the threshold and receive at second hand that which a deep and abiding consideration would have brought him into the very heart of. If we abide continuously in the living presence of Jesus, we shall speak, if not with other tongues, at least powerfully with our own tongues as the holy spirit shall give us utterance, and unbelieving men and women, whom we confront, shall not be able to resist the wisdom and spirit with which we speak.—Rev. J. F. Williams of the First Baptist church.

Let him teach, and surely if the churches are in earnest, sufficient young men and women can be found who wish to learn about the scriptures and prepare themselves for teaching them.

But—again the but comes in—but, don't you thus destroy the Bible? Destroy it? A million times no. Any reader is invited towards liberty by reading Byron, Shelley or Keats. But if the reader understands the condition of England around about 1800, understands the treatment awarded to Priestley, Coleridge and a host of others; understands the French revolution and the condition of Prussia and Spain at the same season, the poets gain a new beauty and vigor. And, similarly, if one understands the condition of the Bible, the surroundings of its various writers and the reason for their faiths, the whole book gains an added interest.

The Y. M. C. A. I am sure, would find the room. El Paso should be able to furnish the man, and the churches should find the pupils.

A knowledge of the Bible is an essential to Sunday school success.

Duty of Preachers. IV. The church as a place of biblical instruction.

Second to the Sunday school, the pulpit should be the source of Bible knowledge. I will not be guilty of the impertinence of speaking to preachers, but would like to wish the urgent three ways of helping the hearer:

(a) Giving each Sunday a short Bible story to children.

(b) Explaining before reading the connections of the lesson.

(c) Using the positive results of recent biblical research that have so clarified many of the sayings of the Bible.

Unless the lovers of the greatest of books see to it, America will soon be a Bibleless nation, and then one of two results will follow: First, there will be a number of fanatical people who will quote promiscuously and disjointedly texts to prove any assertion under the sun; or, second, there will be an increasing army of skeptics who regard the Bible as a relic of a previous barbarous age, a relic interesting in a museum, but useless for live days and live men and women.

be held, at which will be rendered the following program:

Organ voluntary, "Benediction Nuptial" by Saint Sains, Hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy."

Solo, Miss Gertrude Bell, "Hear Us O Father," by Millard.

Address by the pastor on "Music." Duo, Mrs. K. C. Copenhaver and Miss Gertrude Bell, "O Mother Dear, Jerusalem," by Lansing.

Solo, Miss Rosa Leale, "The Man of Sorrows," by Adams.

Antiphon, the choir, "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem," by Maunier.

Offertory, Hymn, "God Be With You Till We Meet Again."

Benediction, Chant, "Abide With Me," by Sayre.

Postlude, "Festival March," by Sayre.

Mrs. K. C. Copenhaver is choir director and Miss Thelma Patterson, organist.

Altura Presbyterian Church. At the Altura Presbyterian church, corner Idaho and Russell streets, Grandview, Rev. W. C. Baber, pastor, announces services Sunday as follows: Preaching by the pastor at 11 a. m. and 5 p. m. Sunday school at 9:45 a. m. Leonard West, superintendent.

Trinity Methodist Church. At Trinity M. E. church, South corner Mesa Avenue and East Boulevard, Rev. C. Wesley Webber, pastor, announces Sunday's services as follows: Bible school at 9 a. m. Morning service; anthem, "Praise Ye the Father," by the choir; sermon by Rev. John J. Randolph, chaplain 15th infantry, U. S. army, solo, "The Hills of God," Mrs. A. A. Lawler. Evening service: Epworth League at 7 p. m. Topic: "The Call of God." Solo, J. J. Ayers, conference leader, and the laymen will have charge. Sermon, 8 p. m. by Rev. Ira M. Bryce of Orange, Texas. Anthem, "O Lord, How Majestic Art Thou Works," by the choir. Solo, "Hold Thou My Hand," (Briggs), Mrs. W. W. Evans.

East El Paso Methodist. At the East El Paso Methodist Episcopal church, South corner of Grama and Rivera streets, H. P. Bond, pastor, services Sunday as follows: Preaching by the pastor at 10 a. m. and 8 p. m. Epworth League, 7 p. m. Miss Helen Youngker, president. Midweek prayer and service, 6 p. m. by Rev. S. P. m. In charge of the official board.

Highland Park Methodist. At the Highland Park Methodist church, corner of Federal and Cedar streets, Rev. Wallace R. Evans, pastor, Sunday services will be as follows: Sunday school at 9:45 a. m. C. W. Bretz, superintendent, preaching services at 11 a. m. and 3 p. m. Epworth League at 7 p. m. "The Duty and Glory of Unselfish Living" the subject of the morning service. "Made Again" is the evening theme. Miss Myrtle Hastings will have charge of the league service. O. V. Lee will conduct the Wednesday evening prayer service.

Austin Park Christian. At the Austin Park Christian church, corner Montana and Sebada streets, one block from Fort Bliss car line, Rev. J. E. Allen, pastor, announces services will be held Sunday as follows: Sunday school at 9:30 a. m. communion at 10:45, followed immediately by preaching service. Christian Endeavor at 7 p. m. and preaching again at 8. In the morning elder M. A. Goff will preach and in the evening Rev. Perry J. Rice, pastor of the First Christian church, will preach.

First Baptist Church. At the First Baptist church, Magoffin avenue and Virginia street, the pastor, Rev. J. F. Williams, announces Sunday services as follows: Preaching by the pastor the morning service, subject, "The Power to Which Jesus' Presence Gives to the Believer." In the evening the pastor will preach on "Spiritual Gravitation." Sunday school meets at 9:30 a. m. Prof. G. P. Putnam, superintendent. G. V. P. U. meets at 7 p. m. Prayer meeting Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock.

Calvary-Houston Square. At the Calvary-Houston Square Baptist church, corner Montana and Virginia, Rev. O. J. Wade, pastor, The pastor will preach both morning and evening. Sunday school 9:30 a. m. C. V. Wade, superintendent. G. V. P. U. meets in Baraca room at 7 p. m.

Highland Park Baptist. At the Highland Park Baptist church, Dakota and Gold streets, Rev. A. E. Boyd, pastor, The pastor will occupy the pulpit at both hours Sunday, the subject for the morning sermon, will be "Man's Long Home," for the evening, "The Prodigal Son." Sunday school at 10 a. m. preaching at 11 a. m. B. V. P. U. at 7 p. m. preaching at 8 p. m.

Grand View Baptist. At the Grand View Baptist mission, Idaho and Myra streets, Rev. S. L. Holloway, missionary, Sunday school at 9 a. m. R. M. Denman, superintendent. Members of the East El Paso Sunday school will be present and assist in the service. Midweek prayer service.

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